

**SOURCE****Employment rights of young workers**

## Working time and the minimum wage

If you are under 18 but over school-leaving age you are classed as a young worker. You reach school-leaving age at the end of the summer term of the school year in which you turn 16.

### Working time limits

A young worker cannot usually be made to work more than eight hours per day or 40 hours per week. These hours cannot be averaged over a longer period and you are not allowed to ignore these restrictions.

You'll only be able to work longer hours if you need to:

- keep the continuity of service or production, or
- respond to a surge in demand for a service or product.

This is provided that:

- there is no adult available to do the work, or
- your training needs are not negatively affected.

### The minimum wage

You become eligible for the national minimum wage (NMW) when you're older than school-leaving age. The rate of NMW will then depend on your exact age. There isn't a national minimum wage for people under 16.

There are different levels of NMW, depending on your age and whether you are an apprentice. The rates from 1 October 2012 are:

- £6.19 per hour – the main rate for workers aged 21 and over
- £4.98 per hour – the 18–20 rate
- £3.68 per hour – the 16–17 rate for workers above school-leaving age but under 18.

The apprentice rate is £2.65 per hour for apprentices under 19, or for those aged 19 or over and in the first year of their apprenticeship.

Most workers in the UK over school-leaving age are legally entitled to be paid at least the NMW and all employers have to pay it to you if you are entitled to it. It makes no difference:

- if you are paid weekly or monthly, by cheque, in cash or in another way
- if you work full time, part time or any other working pattern
- if you work at your employer's own premises or elsewhere
- what size your employer is
- where you work in the UK.

You are entitled to the NMW even if you sign a contract agreeing to be paid at a lower rate. This is regardless of whether you sign of your own free will or because your employer persuades or makes you – you must still be paid the proper rate.



**The Pay and Work Rights Helpline gives confidential help and advice on the NMW. If you need to work longer than 40 hours a week or you think your employer is unfairly asking you to work over this limit, you can call them on 0800 917 2368. The helpline can take calls in over 100 languages.**



**A** Read the text and answer the questions.

1 What does NMW stand for?

2 What is the NMW for people aged 18-20?

3 Who can you call for help and advice about the NMW?

4 What is the maximum time each day that a young worker can be made to work for?

5 In what circumstances can a young worker be asked to exceed the working time limit?

6 When does a young person reach school-leaving age?

**B** Which of these statements are true and which are false according to the text?

1 The Pay and Work Rights Helpline will tell your employer that you contacted them.

True ☐

False ☐

2 A young worker cannot normally be made to work more than 40 hours a week.

True ☐

False ☐

3 The NMW does not apply to you if you are paid in cash.

True ☐

False ☐

4 An apprentice aged 25 and in their first year is entitled to a NMW of £2.65 per hour.

True ☐

False ☐

5 A young worker will be under 18 years old.

True ☐

False ☐

6 All workers above school-leaving age in the UK are entitled to a NMW of at least £4.98 per hour.

True ☐

False ☐

**C** Insert a word from the list below into the text so that it makes sense.

hour jobs minimum increase opposed

The national  wage was introduced in the UK in 1999 when it was set at £3.60 per . People who  the NMW said that it would reduce the number of  and  inflation, but that did not happen.

**D** Write a sentence to answer each of the following questions. Make sure you use capital letters and full stops where they are needed.

- 1 Do small employers have to pay the national minimum wage?
- 2 I am from Romania and my English is not very good. Will the Helpline understand me?
- 3 My employer made me sign a contract to be paid £2.50 an hour. Does that mean I am not entitled to the national minimum wage?

**E** Read about the person below.

I am an apprentice in a care home. A lot of the other people there work a 50- or 60-hour week. My manager says I must do the same as it is normal in our sector and our clients need care. I am only given the rubbish jobs to do like clearing up and emptying the bins, I am not learning anything. She also makes me miss my off-job training days sometimes. It is making me really tired and I am struggling to complete my portfolio.



What advice would you give this person?



**F** Discuss wages and working hours in your group.

- Do staff in health and social care work long hours?
- Do you think that workers in health and social care are well paid?
- Why do people choose to work in the health and social care?
- What do you know about trade unions? How do they help? Would you join one?

**G** Choose the correct answer to each of these questions.

1 The NMW for workers over 21 is:

- a) £4.98 ☐
- b) £6.19 ☐
- c) £3.68 ☐

2 The national minimum wage does not apply to:

- a) people paid a monthly salary ☐
- b) people under 16 ☐
- c) people who agree to a lower rate ☐

3 The Pay and Work Rights Helpline gives advice on:

- a) contracts of employment ☐
- b) health and safety at work ☐
- c) working time limits ☐

**H** Draft a leaflet for apprentices aged 16-19 telling them about their rights.